Wellness Escapes

Find Your Bliss
Journeys for Mind, Body, and Soul

The Oberoi Sukhvilas Spa Resort in India.
Sign us up for that full-body massage or invigorating facial, but when it comes to wellness, there are so many more relaxing, indulgent, and life-changing experiences waiting to be enjoyed at a spa. Wellness is anything that fuels the mind, body, or soul, and dozens of Virtuoso hotels, tour operators, cruise lines, and destinations specialize in travel of this feel-good variety. Browse our glossary to find inspiration for your next wellness getaway – who knows, you might just fall in love with forest bathing.

– Elaine Glusac
Essential-Oil Blending

The use of a plant-extracted oil mixture in spa treatments, such as massages. Several spas offer custom apothecary blending.

**TRY IT:** Between paddleboarding at sunrise and saluting sundown in yoga class, guests can create their own massage oils (featuring local botanicals) at the 301-room Andaz Maui at Wailea Resort. • An herb-filled apothecary, where healers known as manos santas create custom massage oils, greets spa guests in the garden setting of Spa Botánico at the 115-room Dorado Beach, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve in Puerto Rico.

Forest Bathing

From the Japanese term shinrin-yoku – “taking in the forest atmosphere” – forest bathing is the practice of immersing oneself in nature. It can result in health benefits such as reduced stress and improved mood.

**TRY IT:** Guides stop to examine wildflowers, river stones, and leaf patterns on mindful forest-bathing walks in the woods at the 4,200-acre, 68-room Blackberry Farm in Tennessee’s Great Smoky Mountains. • In Pennsylvania, the 58-room Lodge at Woodloch offers contemplative walks that focus on breathing and awareness of the beauty of nature.

Good Night’s Sleep

Sleep therapy involves learning how to switch off distractions and enjoy a restful slumber. It promotes healthy weight loss and stress reduction.

**TRY IT:** The Sleep with Six Senses program at Portugal’s 60-room Six Senses Douro Valley (and available at other Six Senses Hotels, Resorts, and Spas worldwide) diagnoses insomnia patterns, tracks sleep with an app, and provides rest-promoting amenities, such as organic bedding and eye masks. • The 212 rooms at the Equinox Hotel, NYC, which opens in June, are designed to promote deep sleep amid the frenzy of Manhattan with thermostats set at temperatures that induce sleep and super-luxe mattresses.

Holistic Healing

A treatment plan that addresses the complete person – mind, body, and spirit – in the pursuit of optimal wellness.

**TRY IT:** At the 162-room Schloss Elmau Luxury Spa, Retreat & Cultural Hideaway in Germany’s Bavarian Alps, the multiday Turtle Spa Concept program incorporates traditional Chinese medicine while addressing exercise, nutrition, and the immune system. • Guests of the 87-room Rancho La Puerta Fitness Resort & Spa in Tecate, Mexico, can choose from more than 50 exercise classes offered every day, plus mindfulness sessions, art workshops, cooking classes, and treatments in Ayurveda, acupuncture, and more.
Jogging

The act of running at a gentle pace, which can offer cardiovascular benefits, improve mood, and provide physical conditioning.

TRY IT: Join locals for a jog along Vancouver, British Columbia’s 5.5-mile Stanley Park seawall, which immerses travelers in a scenic part of the city where rain forest meets ocean. • Switzerland’s Dolder Grand offers four self-guided or trainer-led jogging tours through Zürich, where guests lope past sights that include the famed Bahnhofstrasse and the National Museum of Zürich.

Indigenous Treatments

Spa treatments that honor the holistic traditions of Native Americans and pay respect to nature and the cycle of the seasons.

TRY IT: Nestled in the red rocks of Sedona’s Boynton Canyon, Mii amo, a 16-room destination spa, offers Native American-inspired practices, such as guided imagery, which advances self-awareness and clarifies intentions. • At California’s 24-room Casa Palmero at Pebble Beach Resorts, the Spa at Pebble Beach offers Native American cleansing ceremonies that use local white sage and elderberry.

Kelp

A variety of seaweed that has long been a staple in traditional medicine. It’s increasingly showing up in hydrating, antioxidant, and vitamin-rich spa treatments.

TRY IT: Fittingly, the Canyon Ranch spas aboard Regent Seven Seas Cruises ships offer an array of massages, bodywork, and facials using hydrating, seaweed-based products. • In Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, the 115-room Resort at Pedregal brings the ocean inside the spa by using hand-harvested seaweed extracts in its scrubs, wraps, and masks.

Life Skills

Necessary skills for everyday practice (grocery shopping, processing grief), and a big component of healthy-living programs offered at many wellness resorts.

TRY IT: The three-day VeraVia wellness retreats at the 327-room Park Hyatt Aviara Resort, Golf Club & Spa in Carlsbad, California, cover fitness, weight loss, nutrition, and spiritual healing; therapists also offer post-trip coaching. • Multiday programs at Miami’s 110-room Pritikin Longevity Center + Spa incorporate medical consultations, healthy aging classes, and programs that address stress, sleep issues, emotional eating, and more.
(and Y) Chromosome Testing

The use of DNA testing to examine a person’s genes and prescribe custom fitness and nutrition regimes.

**TRY IT:** Guests of the 49-room Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa in Southern California receive epigenetic advice on fitness, detoxing, sleep, relationships, and balance – all based on results of genetic testing. In Massachusetts, the 126-room Canyon Ranch, Lenox (part of the Canyon Ranch Wellness Resorts brand) offers guests access to tests of their personal nutrigenetics – the interaction between genes and nutrients – which can influence appetite, satiety, and meal timing.

Yoga Iterations

Traditional yoga remains popular, but varieties of the ancient Hindu discipline are evolving as creative practitioners find diverting ways for students to take part.

**TRY IT:** The 540-room Fairmont Orchid, Hawaii Island offers flo-yo – floating yoga practiced on a stand-up paddleboard. It combines a total body workout with mind-body balance. In the Dominican Republic, the 60-room Eden Roc at Cap Cana offers antigravity yoga, a practice that uses suspended silk hammocks to help realign the body.

Zen Goals

Zen Buddhism directs adherents to meditate on being in the present for enlightenment, a practice being nurtured at many spas that encourage guests to tune in.

**TRY IT:** The Blue Mindfulness beach hike at California’s 400-room Monarch Beach Resort takes guests on an inner journey encouraged by the rhythm of the Pacific Ocean’s waves. In serene southern Vietnam, the Anantara Spa at the 26-room Anantara Quy Nhon Villas offers private meditation sessions with a local monk.